

MCCLAIN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, INC.

Andalusia, AL

Barbara & Kevin McClain, Owners

“Success Story”

After struggling since 1996, Barbara and Kevin, the owners of McClain Construction in Andalusia, AL were tired. They had had what could only be termed limited success.

McClain Construction Company had been born out of the ashes of a previous business venture selling ATVs and watercraft. But it had struggled. To be sure, McClain Construction, an ALDOT-licensed construction company, had achieved some success. They had worked hard to improve their work, and they had won some contracts on bridge work components in AL. But it had been tough to find regular projects.

Barbara McClain: “Sometimes, the only recourse to laying off their work force was to go to the bank and borrow money to make the payroll so those valuable employees could take their wages home to meet their bills. We did that without hesitation because we have always tried to treat our employees like family. We had to do what was fair for them.”

The Company’s financial fate was about to change – dramatically. After months of negotiating the complex application process for SBA 8A & HubZone certification even as they struggled to line up projects with the State of Alabama, the McClains received their official letter with their hard-won federal designation in September 2005.

Things haven’t been the same since.

“It wasn’t like the federal government suddenly started handing over work – far from it. But our certification was the best thing that ever happened to our family (and our employees’ families),” said Barbara. “It gave us the chance to prove our worth to a whole new client base – even outside the state.” And McClain Construction was not about to miss the opportunity to prove its mettle.

Barbara and Kevin worked like crazy during the Fall and Winter 2005-2006 to put their companies’ certification, capabilities, and values in front of federal contract officers. Eventually, a somewhat skeptical contract officer at Keesler AFB in Biloxi gave them a chance. He awarded them a \$3,000,000 contract for “on-call” services at the Air Force base. The official name is SABRE work, and it includes odd-job things like fixing & replacing air conditioners, minor plumbing work, and building remodeling. They excelled. The somewhat skeptical federal officer in Biloxi became a strong supporter of McClain’s honesty, ability to meet commitments, and quality work.

Then, this same contracting officer gave them a second contract for \$3 million four weeks later –again, at Keesler AFB. And because McClain’s work was so good, he gave

them another \$3.5 million contract. Now, altogether, Keesler has awarded over \$13 million in contracts to the McClains.

And that wasn't all. Their reputation spreading, other nearby federal installations like the Navy Seebee Base in Gulfport and the VA Hospital in Biloxi awarded McClain more work. Soon, they had over \$6 million in awarded or in process work from these other installations.

McClain has now seeking to expand beyond its successful Mississippi experience. It has entered bidding for contracts at Fort Rucker, AL and at nearby Hurlburt Field, Tyndall AFB, and Eglin AFB in the Florida Panhandle. Hurlburt's \$2 million contract has entered the final negotiation phase, but the total work for all these federal facilities in Florida will exceed \$20 million. Barbara is so grateful for this recent success as an 8A program participants.

"Our strength lies with our personnel," Barbara is quick to acknowledge. Each of them is an expert in his or her field, and we appreciate them all." Barbara also added that key staff at the SBA office in Birmingham has helped immensely. "Susan Baxter, Elaine Dunlap, and William Howell have been wonderful," McClain said.

The McClains (Barbara is over 60 years of age) are not about to retire. Instead, they are working harder than ever – now that their quality workmanship precedes them - to expand their work for these military bases. There is every reason to assume they will be successful.

Quite a story for a once-struggling construction company from small-town Andalusia, Alabama. Congratulations, McClain Construction Company. You are a real credit to you profession, to your community, and to SBA.

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